

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please add the following paragraph before line 3 of page 1:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §120 to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/725,352, filed November 29, 2000, the disclosure of which is expressly incorporated by reference herein.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 10 as follows:

A number of prior art references teach the value of the vacuum bandage or the provision of the vacuum in the space above the surface of a chronic wound. Several Russian language articles exist which establish the efficacy of vacuum therapy discovered in the 1980s. Examples of such prior art articles, each of which discusses the use of application of vacuum to a wound to promote healing, are as follows: ~~Vacuum therapy in the treatment of acute suppurative diseases of soft tissues and suppurative wounds~~ “Vacuum therapy in the treatment of acute suppurative diseases of soft tissues and suppurative wounds”, Davydov, et al., Vestn. Khir., Sept. 1988 (The Sept. 1988 article”); ~~Pathenogenic mechanism of the effect of vacuum therapy on the course of the wound process~~ “Pathenogenic mechanism of the effect of vacuum therapy on the course of the wound process”, Davydov, et al. Khirurgiia, June 1990 (“the June 1990 article”); and ~~Vacuum therapy in the treatment of suppurative lactation mastitis~~ “Vacuum therapy in the treatment of suppurative lactation mastitis”, Davydov, et al. Vestn. Khir., Nov. 1986 (“the Nov. 1986 article”). The Russian articles distinguish wound drainage from use of vacuum therapy for healing. The Russian authors report that vacuum therapy resulted in faster cleansing of the wound and more rapid detoxification than with the traditional incision-drainage method. The November 1986 Russian article describes the vacuum therapy techniques as a reduction of 0.8-1 atmosphere for 20 minutes at the time of surgery, and subsequent 1.5 to 3 hour treatments at a vacuum reduced pressure of 0.1 to 0.15 from atmosphere, twice daily. These Russian articles teach the use of negative pressure to effect healing. The articles describe using several sessions per day, each lasting up to one hour, with a vacuum of 76-114 mmHg. The Russian articles teach using this vacuum method to decrease the number of microbes in the wound. The June 1990 Russian article teaches that this vacuum therapy provides a significant antibacterial effect.

The article describes the stepped up inflow of blood to the zone around the wound to lead to an increase in the number of leukocytes reaching the focus of ~~inflammation~~ inflammation. Subsequent articles and patents further develop the benefits obtained with vacuum therapy. The prior art, therefore, teaches the benefit and value of a vacuum bandage.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 7 as follows:

A wound care bandage 10 is provided for use with a vacuum and irrigation source 12, 14, respectively, as shown in Fig. 1. An illustrative vacuum and irrigation source 12, 14 is disclosed in Application Serial Number ~~_____~~ 09/725,666 filed simultaneous with this application and assigned to the same assignee. This application is specifically ~~incorporative~~ incorporated herein ~~be~~ by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 12 as follows:

Bandage 10 promotes the healing of a large wound 16 (shown in Figs. 3 and 7) by providing vacuum therapy to the wound 16 to promote blood flow and remove exudate from a wound surface 18 of the wound 16 and by providing for irrigation of the wound 16 with fluids such as saline, for example. Reference is also made to co-pending with this United States Patent application serial number 09/369,113 (now U.S. Patent No. 6,458,109) filed August 5, 1999 and titled ~~Wound Treatment Apparatus~~ “Wound Treatment Apparatus”. This pending application which is owned by the assignee of this present application is specifically incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 20 as follows:

As shown in Fig. 3, wound care bandage 10 comprises a thin, flexible wound dressing member 20, shown in Fig. 2. Member 20 is made of a medical grade silicone or other type of elastomer which is pliable. Two companies, for example, which manufacture such medical grade silicone are GE Silicones and NuSil Technology. It is within the scope of this disclosure, however, to include a wound dressing member made of any type of thin, flexible material. Member 20 may be molded to include anti-microbial constituents. For example, it is within the scope of this disclosure to impregnate member 20 with silver ions which are known anti-microbials. The following PCT publications illustrate the use of anti-microbials in various products and are incorporated herein by reference: ~~Antimicrobial Plastic Closures for Drinking Containers~~ “Antimicrobial Plastic Closures for Drinking Containers”, WO 00/26100; ~~Antimicrobial Contact Lens Case~~ “Antimicrobial Contact Lens

Case”, WO 00/038552; Antimicrobial Fabric and Medical Graft of the Fabric “Antimicrobial Fabric and Medical Graft of the Fabric”, WO 00/32247; Antimicrobial Suturing Ring for Heart Valve “Antimicrobial Suturing Ring for Heart Valve”, WO 00/30567.